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ABSTRACT

Outdoor education is potentially a powerful tool for teaching children about conservation, the beauty of nature, the interrelatedness of the natural and social sciences, and the meaning of life. These goals are not accomplished through an emphasis on any single aspect of the curriculum, but rather through all subject areas. This has resulted in development of integrated curricula from kindergarten through twelfth grade in the few schools which have been able or willing to provide a coherent ongoing program. One of the major obstacles confronting schools is the cost of establishing an outdoor education program. However, even when financial problems are surmounted, staffing problems remain since few teachers are trained to utilize the natural resources available to them. In order to provide a framework for understanding its present status, a brief history of outdoor education and descriptions of some existing outdoor education programs are presented. In addition, outlines for inservice and university programs to train teachers are suggested. (TL)

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OUTDOOR EDUCATION--ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

Keynote Address delivered by Dr. John J. Kirk
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Before we begin to explore the origins of the outdoor education movement, I think it might be helpful if we stopped for a moment to define the terms as we will be using them this evening. As you know, there are many titles applied to what we're now doing in outdoor education, such as environmental education, environmental science, natural resource use education, and conservation education, to name only a few. All of these tend only to confuse the general public and bewilder many of the professionals.

Even the term outdoor education itself has many definitions, and I would like to add mine this evening, since it is from this frame of reference I will be making my major points. "Outdoor education is the method which utilizes the out-of-doors to cultivate a reverence for life through an ecological exploration of the interdependence of all living things, one on the other, and to form a land ethic illustrating man's temporary stewardship of the land." This then is what we mean, or at least what I mean, when I speak of outdoor education as it applies to the school curriculum. Now let us, however, try to trace the historical development of the outdoor education movement.

As we proceed through recorded history, the Naturalist Period, or naturalism in education, would perhaps be considered by most to be the philosophical point of view which could be considered the forerunner of the outdoor education movement as we know it today. It is doubtful that any of you were able to complete your introductory courses in educational philosophy without meeting Jean Jacques Rousseau and his famous work, EMILE.

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You may recall the basic premise Rousseau advances in his text: "Education is life, not a preparation for life." In Book III he goes on to state: "Never substitute the symbol for the thing signified unless it is impossible to show the thing itself." This point of view would, of course, be considered basic to the outdoor education movement today.

Johann Basetow, a contemporary of Rousseau in Germany, was one of the first to utilize field trips as a method in the teaching of the biological sciences. Basetow believed children had to have actual contact with various types of living things in order to more fully understand the meaning of life and the life cycle. Many other educational philosophers, such as the Swiss educational reformer Pestalozzi, frequently made reference to the need for taking children into nature in order to provide them with a more positive climate for learning. All through the history of education one can find references to utilization of the out-of-doors as a means to enhance the learning situation. However, let us not dwell too long on the distant past, but rather, let us move into the concepts and adaptations of these various points of view which can be found in the outdoor education movement today.

The first recorded resident experience in outdoor education for school children in the United States occurred during the school year of 1861 when a private schoolmaster in Washington, Connecticut, yielded to the requests of his students that they be given the opportunity to live like soldiers. Frederick William Gunn, who was also credited with establishing the organized summer camping movement as we know it today, provided his entire student body with several overnight and two- or three-day living experiences in the out-of-doors during the school year. The program consisted of the regular school curriculum, combined with a generous offering of what today would be called outdoor recreation. During the

latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, other isolated examples of outdoor education experiences can be found in some of the New England states, the Midwest, and the Far West. However, these early experiences did little to stimulate the vast majority of school administrators into exploring the possibilities and potential of outdoor education. It was not until the late 1920's that school camping as it was then called began to develop and take shape. During the late 1920's and early 1930's, the movement produced its two most eloquent spokesmen, and collectively their efforts represent the most significant factor in the spread and growth of outdoor education in the United States, and in fact, their influence has been felt throughout the world.

In 1929 L. B. Sharp completed the first doctoral study on outdoor education at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City. Dr. Sharp went on to establish the famous Life Camps and National Camp in northern New Jersey. The publishers of LIFE MAGAZINE were the sponsors of this early effort in outdoor education, and down through these early years virtually every leader in the outdoor education movement in the United States visited Dr. Sharp's National Camp. This development took place in the late 1930's and early 1940's.

One of the research projects conducted by Dr. Sharp with children from the New York Public Schools rather conclusively demonstrated the value and potential of an outdoor education experience for school children. The results of that research project are reported in the text EXTENDING EDUCATION THROUGH CAMPING, and I certainly recommend it to you.

The basic philosophy advanced by Dr. Sharp was that the out-of-doors is a laboratory providing direct or "life" experiences which contribute to a clearer interpretation of the natural environment in achieving the goals of education. In other words, learn in the classroom what best can

be learned there, and that which can best be learned in the out-of-doors through direct experience should there be learned.

While all this activity was taking place in northern New Jersey during the early 1940's, a center of equal prominence was developing in Battle Creek, Michigan. There, through the generosity of the Kellogg Foundation, three school camps were established. The man connected with one of these camps was Dr. Julian Smith, then principal of Lakeview High School. Through his imaginative leadership the Battle Creek Outdoor Education Program was developed and refined until it became a model which many other school systems used as a guide in developing their own outdoor education programs. Dr. Smith went on to a position with the Michigan State Department of Public Instruction where he was instrumental in working out a joint program with the Michigan Conservation Department intended to encourage outdoor education in the public schools of the state. This joint effort was so successful that in 1945 the Michigan State Legislature passed enabling legislation which permitted school districts to own and operate their own outdoor education centers. As a result of Dr. Smith's efforts, the state of Michigan became recognized as the leader in the field of outdoor education--a position which the state still enjoys.

The basic approach advanced by Dr. Smith stresses the acquisition of skills for the intelligent use of the out-of-doors and the worthy use of leisure. While many of these skills may be considered in the area of recreation, they also supplement the school curriculum in the areas of health education, safety education, citizenship, field science, and conservation.

For a time the two schools of thought operated somewhat independently, and many programs were developed throughout the United States stressing either one or the other philosophy. Then as the movement began to spread, many school programs began to blend and combine the various aspects of

these two schools of thought, for the ultimate goals were, in fact, identical. Namely, to assist children in developing a greater understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. One of the individuals who did much to synthesize these concepts is Dr. Renald Carlson of the University of Indiana. I am sure that his name is not new to many of you. During the late 1940's and early 1950's another interesting trend was initiated which again illustrates the growth and development of the outdoor education movement. Colleges and universities began to establish outdoor centers and field campuses. The purpose of these centers was to train future teachers in the methodology of outdoor education. I will return to this point a little later in my remarks when we begin to explore the teacher-training programs.

Now we find ourselves in the 1950's, and outdoor education has become a recognized segment of the school curriculum in many systems throughout the United States. The vast majority of programs during the 1950's took place at the fifth or sixth grade level, and the experience usually consisted of five days in residence at an outdoor center where teachers and pupils worked, lived, and learned together. The majority of programs tended to reflect the influence of the two points of view discussed earlier. These programs were generally well accepted by parents, teachers, and boards of education. The general public finally began to realize that experiences in the out-of-doors should be considered a part of the public school program, and they were also able to discover that certain aspects of the curriculum could be taught more effectively and more efficiently in five days in an outdoor center than in an entire year in the classroom. The reason why children learn more effectively in the out-of-doors is rather obvious to any teacher who recalls Thorndike's Laws of Learning. We can all recall the principle which states that through the use of

additional senses, the child will learn more rapidly and retain material for a longer period of time. We certainly have the opportunity to incorporate more of the senses in the learning process in an outdoor setting than we do in the classroom. You know, American education has sometimes been defined as a series of facts passing from the notes of the teacher to the notes of the student without passing through the minds of either. While we hope this critical observation does not apply too frequently, we do know that it definitely does not apply to teaching which takes place in the out-of-doors.

Another by-product or concomitant value of an outdoor education program in a resident setting is that it provides the teachers with the opportunity of observing the children in many situations and under many conditions which do not exist in the classroom. By gaining this additional insight, the teacher frequently becomes better equipped to cope with the problems which the children bring to the classroom. Of course, there is another side to that coin, and it is that the children are also provided with an opportunity to see their teacher in quite a different light. The casual dress and informal atmosphere helps the youngsters to realize that their teachers are human beings after all. This too contributes to a more positive relationship back in the classroom.

This then represents a thumbnail picture of the growth pattern of outdoor education programs in the United States through the 1950's. However, in 1960 something happened to add even greater impetus to the movement. We are, of course, making reference to that "thousand days of elegance" which is unparalleled and unmatched in American history. We are referring, as you probably have guessed, to the term of office of our late and beloved President John F. Kennedy. His dynamic intellect touched so many segments of our society, that it will take historians

and social scientists several generations to identify his total impact. One area, however, where we can already see and feel his influence is in the field of conservation education. Not since the time of Theodore Roosevelt did the out-of-doors and the conservation field have so eloquent and dedicated a spokesman occupying the White House. The Kennedy Administration has frequently been referred to as the "Renaissance" of the conservation movement in the United States. You may be interested to learn that more articles and books have been published on conservation since the election of John Kennedy than during the entire period from the term of office of Theodore Roosevelt up to the time of the Kennedy Administration. During that magnificent thousand days, John Kennedy dedicated the Gifford Pinchot Institute for Conservation Studies in Milford, Pennsylvania, which has as its purpose the development of conservation materials which will assist the public school systems in the United States to integrate the teaching of conservation into every subject, K through 12. Also during this period of time the Land Between the Lakes Project was expanded, and its purpose was identified as a center for the teaching of conservation principles. This area is located in the states of Tennessee and Kentucky and consists of 175,000 acres which is administered by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Having visited the area just a month ago, I am convinced that this forty-mile-long strip of land, located between two gigantic lakes, will one day become the mecca for conservation education, not only in the United States, but probably throughout the world.

As a result of this emphasis on conservation, many outdoor education programs were re-evaluated, and their new purpose was to cultivate in the minds of children a greater understanding in the role the land and wilderness areas play in their lives. This is not to say that outdoor education programs of the past did not also offer meaningful and positive experiences

in conservation education. However, during the past three years more outdoor education programs seem to identify this as their major purpose and major contribution. At our School in New Jersey we refer to this emphasis as the cultivation of a reverence for life and the formation of a land ethic which we have already described in our definition. These goals are not accomplished through an emphasis on any one aspect of the school curriculum, but rather through all subject areas. Outdoor education is not just the natural sciences, nor is it just recreation, but rather it is a combination of the natural sciences, the social sciences, the fine arts, and yes, recreation. All these subjects must be utilized and integrated into a meaningful outdoor education experience if the true value of the program is to be realized. This renewed emphasis on conservation principles has also resulted in the development of integrated curriculums, kindergarten through grade 12. Many times in the past the outdoor education experience occurred at the fifth or sixth grade level with little, if any, connection with the classroom activities which preceded it and many times with very few activities relating to it after the youngsters have returned to the confines of the classroom.

Today's outdoor education programs actually begin at the kindergarten level with perhaps one or two class periods a week featuring outdoor experiences which tend to teach important lessons in conservation. These outdoor experiences will continue through the primary grades, with more elaborate field trips which would ultimately lead to the resident experience in the fifth or sixth grade. Hopefully, if the curriculum has been thoughtfully developed, the learning experiences which occurred during the resident period serve to enrich the curriculum during the junior high and senior high years.

In our own state of New Jersey we have noticed an interesting trend developing with the junior and senior high school programs. The children will be taken for a resident weekend experience in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. Each time a different facet of the curriculum is stressed. For example, the first weekend may stress the natural sciences; another weekend, social studies; and another, perhaps the fine arts. Again, the central theme is to assist the children to develop a greater appreciation for the land and their relation to it. From our vantage point then it appears that outdoor education has become the most widely used and accepted method of developing attitudes and changing attitudes in the area of conservation. And when I use the term "conservation," I am referring to it in its broadest concept, which would encompass man and his relationship to his total environment. If we are able to cultivate in our children a greater appreciation for life and living things, then there ultimately is a transfer to human life, and they see themselves in a little different light. This can be referred to as the enhancement of the self concept, and it also tends to strengthen human relationships. If we have been successful in cultivating in our children a true reverence for life, then when they look at another human being, they look beyond the color of his skin, the language he might speak, and the church he might attend. For all of these become mere incidentals, and before them they see another human being, the ultimate of living things, and therefore, worthy of the ultimate of respect. At our School we have taken this even a step further and are attempting to illustrate that through attitude formation in conservation we can actually transcend language barriers and cultural differences and ultimately unite all the children of the world. To this end we supplement our permanent faculty each spring with three outdoor educators from other countries, and at the present time I am working with

educational leaders in eleven countries throughout the world in an effort to form an international organization for outdoor education. Our major purpose will be to cultivate in all children a reverence and respect for life that will perhaps help them to live together with greater understanding and respect.

In attempting to develop a land ethic in our students, we again utilize all areas of the curriculum in an effort to correct the myth of superabundance which has lulled our general population into a state of mind that for several decades permitted the plundering and exploitation of our natural resources, until we have reached a point where our rivers have become open sewers and the air over our great cities has become a blanket of death. We attempt to illustrate the necessity of using our natural resources wisely in order that life on this planet may continue as we now know it.

This approach to education certainly presents a great challenge to our teachers, and unfortunately, most teacher-training institutions do not adequately prepare their students to teach effectively outside the classroom. What then can be done to develop a confidence and expertise in our teachers so that they will be unafraid to venture into the out-of-doors? For those teachers already in the field, it is necessary to conduct training courses that will give them the knowledge and skill they need. They must be taught how to utilize the playground, the parking lot, and the city streets as a supplement to the classroom. In order to provide worthwhile workshops, it will be necessary for Departments of Education to work cooperatively with other Government agencies such as Conservation Departments and also with private organizations such as the Audubon Society and other such groups. The universities must face up to their responsibility by providing summer workshops on field campuses where demonstration projects can be examined and teachers working with children can improve

their skills and effectiveness in an outdoor setting.

It is also necessary for the universities to develop graduate programs leading to the Master's degree and the Doctorate in order that school systems may have competent coordinators to work with the classroom teachers in the development of meaningful programs. In the United States there are approximately one hundred universities now offering advanced degrees in outdoor education and conservation. In our own state of New Jersey we have initiated a new graduate program beginning this past September, and because the need is so great for trained leadership, the program was funded in the amount of a quarter of a million dollars under the provisions of Title V of the Higher Education Act. In our program each of twenty-five selected experienced teachers receives a minimum stipend of $4800 for attending school and earning the Master's degree. They are then obliged to return to their school system and coordinate a K-12 Program in outdoor education and conservation. This is a thirty-two hour graduate program, leading to a Master of Arts in outdoor education and conservation, and the content of the program includes twelve semester hours of the natural sciences, twelve semester hours of history, philosophy, and administration, and ten semester hours of curriculum development and research methods. Six of the semester hours will be taken in residence during the summer months at the School of Conservation. At Rutgers University, which is the State university in New Jersey, I am presently working with a group of faculty members in developing a Ph.D. Program in conservation. Here again, the content will combine the natural sciences, curriculum development, the social sciences, and research methods. It is now possible to earn a Ph.D. in outdoor education at six universities in the United States, and hopefully, Rutgers University will be the seventh in September of 1968.

Now let us look at the teacher-preparation programs at the undergraduate level. It is the feeling of most outdoor educators that an undergraduate major in outdoor education is not desirable. Any specialization in the field should be restricted to graduate programs. However, there is general agreement that all elementary school teachers, social studies teachers, science teachers, and physical education and recreation teachers should be exposed to the methodology of outdoor education. In some institutions all teachers are expected to receive training in outdoor education. This is true in New Jersey where the students attending the State colleges all come to the School of Conservation for a five-day period where they are exposed to the techniques and methods of outdoor education and attitude formation in conservation. Some of the other colleges and universities having outstanding programs in this area are: Northern Illinois University, with its very famous Lorado Taft Field Campus in Oregon, Illinois; Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois; Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio; the University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana; and, of course, the New Jersey State School of Conservation, located in Stokes Forest outside of Branchville, New Jersey. I also learned recently that Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, is developing a three-thousand-acre outdoor education center which will soon be used to provide meaningful experiences for the students and faculty.

Although the various colleges and universities may utilize a different approach, their ultimate goals are the same. Since I am most familiar with my own program, I would like to share with you the techniques that we attempt to employ. There is a resident faculty at the School consisting of three professors. One is an interpretive naturalist; another is a conservation education specialist; and the third is an outdoor recreation specialist. These three resident faculty members are supplemented

with resource personnel from the Department of Conservation and Economic Development. For two days each week we receive the services of a State geologist, a State forester, and a State fish and game specialist. The State Extension Service at Rutgers University provides us with an earth scientist and a county agricultural agent for one or two days as requested. If there are literature, art, or music majors in attendance, then our interpretive naturalist may focus on the aesthetic aspects of the forest community. If business education or math majors are in attendance, then the stress would be on the economic aspects, and if elementary education majors make up the group, then utilization of the woodlands in the total curriculum is stressed. If science majors are in attendance, then naturally, the emphasis is on natural resource management and its effect on man. A sample day consists of a two-and-a-half-hour field experience in the morning, and a two-hour evening experience which may be a panel discussion of some controversial question regarding utilization of the out-of-doors, or it might be a social evening consisting of a square dance, since after all, it was the wilderness and open space where American folk dancing was developed.

The students come to us in their junior year, and the five-day residence experience at the School either precedes or follows the student-teaching experience. Ideally, all would come just prior to their student teaching, but from an administrative point of view, this is not possible. In any event, the experience is related as closely as possible with the student-teaching experience in order that the students may see how the techniques and concepts discussed and explored at the School of Conservation can and should be applied to their own teaching experiences. During an academic year the School of Conservation serves upwards of four thousand college students for a five-day resident experience and twenty-five

hundred sixth graders for a similar five-day experience. In addition, there are several weekend conferences for adult groups, junior high, and senior high school groups. This represents just one approach to the preparation of teachers, and I do not mean to leave you with the idea that it is the best or only method. It is one that has proven effective during the past nineteen years, and which has resulted in a growth of outdoor education programs in New Jersey until at the present time the state of New Jersey ranks fifth in the United States in the percentage of school-age children receiving outdoor education and conservation education experiences.

I have also been asked to review some of the problems faced in the levelopment of outdoor education programs, and the one that is paramount is that of finances. To levelop and staff a resident outdoor education center is not an inexpensive project. However, this should not prevent a school system from leveloping some type of outdoor education program. Perhaps on-site field laboratories can be developed adjacent to the school. This approach was pioneered by Dr. William Stapp of the University of Michigan, who is coordinator to the Ann Arbor Public Schools. There are twenty-seven elementary schools in Ann Arbor, each having a one-, two-, or three-acre field laboratory. The junior high schools have a ten-acre layout, and the high school has a magnificent thirty-arce field laboratory immediately adjacent to it. Dr. Stapp, serving as the coordinator for outdoor education and c servation, works with the teachers in showing them how to utilize the out -doo Although Ann Arbor does have a resident experience, it is not absolut necessary that a resident experience be provided in order to initiate inaful programs in outdoor education and conservation. So the problem of finances can be overcome. Many times when a community sees the effectiveness and the value of a day

program, they become a little more willing to underwrite the cost of establishing and maintaining a resident center.

Another of the problems has been referred to already, and that is the inadequate training of teachers. This can and must be overcome through in-service workshops, college and university courses, and experiences at the undergraduate level. We cannot expect teachers to function adequately in the out-of-doors without proper training.

Another problem in convincing school administrators as to the value of outdoor education and conservation education has been the lack of substantial research to conclusively demonstrate the value of such programs. There has been much research done to illustrate and demonstrate the fact that children can acquire more factual material as a result of outdoor education experiences. However, when we get into the area of attitude formation, we are confronted with a totally different problem. At the present time most of the evaluation tools used to measure attitude formation and attitude change have been subjective. Unfortunately, we are living in an analytical society, where the worth or value of just about anything is measureable on a graph. Attitude formation in conservation falls in the area of metophysics, and unfortunately, we have not yet been able to develop an instrument sensitive enough to truly measure or indicate how attitudes are formed or changed as a result of outdoor education. At the present time the Council on Outdoor Education and Camping, which is a section of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, has an evaluation committee commissioned with the task of developing an instrument that will provide us with a more effective means of measuring this very important aspect of an outdoor education experience.

These represent the three most critical problems facing the growth of outdoor education today. However, I am sure that in time they will be

overcome, and in spite of them, new programs are developing every day in school systems not only in the United States but throughout the world. The reason, I believe, is self-evident. It is because through outdoor education we can perhaps more effectively and more dramatically help children to discover the beauty and magnificence of creation, and provide them with understandings and attitudes that help them to enjoy more fully this great adventure we call life. This is perhaps best illustrated in a poem that was written by one of my students who is presently in her senior year. I would like to share this with you.

Riches

By the rich man's measure, I have no wealth;
By the famous, I'm still unknown.
I can't claim the wisdom of age
For as yet, I'm not full grown.

But I can follow a compass
To any place you name,
And I can turn a pile of sticks
Into a flickering, yellow flame
I can tell by the smell on the breeze
If a summer storm is near.
I can tell you the tales of the stars
On a night when the sky is clear.
I can feel the presence of God
From setting sun to setting sun
And oft when I am wandering
My spirit, in His, is one.

So by my measure, I've untold wealth,
And I'd rather remain unknown.
To be free to search and know
The woods I'm wont to roam.

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